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ABSTRACT

This trainer's guide is intended to assist supervisors of work-based career training projects in teaching students to take an inventory of the hardware, software, and other equipment and materials present in an Information Technology Center (ITeC) and store the inventory in a word processor. The guide is one in a series of core curriculum modules that is intended for use in combination on- and off-the-job programs to familiarize youth with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace. Included in the guide are the following components: project information, a summary of the content and approach of the guide, supervisor's notes, lists of tasks and core skills, an action plan that includes suggested learning activities, supervisor and trainee review sheets, and an assessment form. (MN)

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Youth Training Scheme

CORE EXEMPLAR WORK BASED PROJECT

ITeC inventory

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ESF

CORE SKILLS PROJECT

YTS

OTF No: 5

PROJECT No: Y|42

TYPE Group

The Further Education Staff College
Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6RG ✆ 0761-62503

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ASSESSMENT OF CORE SKILLS

This series of projects contains a number of different formats for recording assessment of core skills. These formats are offered for experimental purposes; none is proven as the 'best' method. All are based on the principle that feedback to trainees is a necessary part of the learning process and that such feedback should include information on core skill development.

Further work is being carried out on the methods of assessing achievement of core skills in work-based learning and of how to log such achievement on a record which trainees can take away from YTS. Some of the results of this work will be included in later MSC/ESF Core Skills Project publications.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE WORK-BASED PROJECTS?

Work-based projects are learning materials which aim to make the most of all the possibilities for developing trainees' skills, knowledge and attitudes in the workplace. They build upon everyday workplace tasks to provide experience of the whole range of YTS learning opportunities.

The projects in this series have been tested with managing agents as part of the YTS Core Project, which is jointly financed by MSC and the European Social Fund. In some cases managing agents will be able to use the projects as they are. In others they will need to be adapted to the circumstances of a particular workplace or to the aims of a particular scheme. Some managing agents will prefer to produce their own projects. For such cases these examples aim to demonstrate some principles of good design in work-based learning materials. These principles are:

To encourage trainees to learn by doing.
To make the most of all the experiences which are available to trainees in the workplaces.
To start from a real task which is seen as relevant by all parties involved — trainees, workplace supervisors, trainers and off-the-job tutors.
To help trainees see the relationships between things learnt on- and off-the-job.
To base the assessment of achievement upon trainees' actual performance in tasks.
To look for all the opportunities for learning which arise from a task and, in particular, to help trainees to develop the core skills. These skills, in number, communication, problem-solving and practical activities, are used in a wide variety of tasks and are essential if trainees are to achieve competence in those tasks*. They are the skills — of finding out information, planning how to do things, overcoming difficulties and so on — which help trainees to learn more quickly in new situations, either in the same workplace, in a different one, or in the world outside work.

Such skills are required naturally by the workplace tasks in these projects and, in requiring trainees to go beyond the task itself, the projects deliberately *add* to the range of core skills which are required in an everyday working situation. This is especially important for some of the skills of communication and problem-solving which trainees are often not given the opportunity to exercise in work experience.

These principles can be incorporated in projects for all placements and for trainees of all ability levels. Although the projects in this series follow a common format, there is no single 'best' style. Nor is any special expertise in writing necessary. Good work-based projects can be produced by anyone who is determined to help trainees to exploit all of the potential for learning in work experience.

*A technical manual 'Core Skills in YTS' is currently available from MSC. It is supported by a short introductory leaflet and a practitioner's guide for supervisors. A separate manual is available on computer literacy/information technology.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Designed for trainees in a newly formed ITeC which is divided into several function areas.

In setting up the ITeC various supplies were purchased specifically, whilst others were accumulated from various sources such as other colleges in the county authority and companies in the locality of the Centre. Other bits and pieces were collected or donated by staff at the Centre. Since supplies were collected piecemeal, they were not recorded systematically and no-one knew exactly what was in the Centre.

In order to produce a record the trainees were given a project to list everything in their allocated area and to set them down under various headings. These would then be catalogued by one group to form the basis for future stock-taking.

Though the project includes an important word processing task, this is not one of the assessed activities. Since word processing skills will be thoroughly assessed as part of the whole programme, assessment here concentrates upon the skills of communication and problem-solving.

SUMMARY

The trainees are required to

- locate information
- carry out tasks resulting from the information gained
- prepare an inventory and catalogue
- decide how work will be carried out

SUPERVISOR'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

This work-based project is designed to focus the trainee upon the core skill areas of: number, communication, practical skills and problem-solving. Wherever possible, it is also designed to provide learning opportunities to improve personal effectiveness, to provide wider knowledge of the world of work and elsewhere and to furnish the trainee with skills which can be transferred to other situations.

The essence of the work-based project is that people learn more quickly and effectively by actually doing something.

The following notes are designed to help you, your staff, and the trainee, so that the project can be carried out with a minimum of disruption to normal work activity:

1. Where appropriate, please advise other staff that the trainee will be doing the project.

2. Please ensure that the trainee has read the project details and understands what is required.

3. Please ensure that the trainee is aware of any aspects of safety, hygiene or security which might touch upon the project.

4. Please ensure that the trainee appreciates that good planning will make the task easier. Wherever possible, and before the project starts, the trainee should be encouraged to take responsibility for his/her learning by estimating time, deciding on equipment and materials, identifying possible hazards and other problems, and generally "thinking the project through".

5. When the project is complete discuss with the trainee the activities he/she has been engaged in. What problems were there? What has he/she learnt? Would he/she tackle the project differently a second time?

6. Encourage the trainee to complete the Trainee's Review page.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. Please help the trainees to draw up the categories to be included in the inventory.

2. Brief the section supervisors to expect the trainees in their sections and tell them how the inventory is to be carried out, what information is required and how it is to be recorded.

3. Ask them to have the necessary trade catalogues available for the trainees' reference so that they can describe, concisely, the tools, equipment and component parts in their section. Ask them to be prepared to identify those items which the trainees cannot locate in the written material.

4. Check progress with them during the project.

5. At stage 7 of the trainees' project briefly discuss their inventory categories to make sure that there are no missing headings.

6. **NOTE** You might think it best to terminate the initial project at stage 7 and involve all the trainees and supervisors in the 'stock taking' stage, so that everything is counted within one continuous period. This might avoid errors due to people removing and using equipment and materials during the stock-taking process, thus eliminating the problems associated with 'floating' stock.

   If the initial project is terminated at stage 7, please ask the cataloguing group to complete the report (stage 10 of their project).

Names

TRAINEE.....

SUPERVISOR.....

TUTOR.....

Times

Please fill in the table below. This will show the time you spend on completing this project. The first column has been filled in as an example. Make another table if you need more space.

BACKGROUND

In any ITeC it is important to catalogue hardware, software and other equipment and materials efficiently. This project involves you in an inventory of such items, and in the production of a catalogue to be stored in the word processor.

SITUATION

In any ITeC where an inventory can be carried out

PURPOSES

Doing this project will enable you to learn more about your workplace. It will also help you to develop your CORE SKILLS in number, communication, problem-solving, and practical activities. Developing these skills will make it easier for you to adapt to changes in your job, and to retrain when the need arises.

The tasks you are asked to do are outlined below, together with the most important core skills that they contain. When you have finished each task, ask your supervisor to tell you how well he/she thought you did in the task, and record this on the Assessment Form near the back of this project. This record will be needed to complete your certificate at the end of your YTS year.

Task	Core skills	
1. Locate catalogues.		
2. Decide method of working and an order in which an inventory will be prepared.	Plan who does what and when. Decide which category something belongs to.	9.2 10.2
3. List all major items in the ITeC.		
4. Note reference number of major items. Describe furniture and software, referring to the catalogues and supervisor.	Identify items by number, colour, etc. Decide which category something belongs to. Find out information from written sources.	2.4 10.2 6.2
5. Type out lists on a word processor.		
6. Produce a master list for the location list.	Provide information in writing. Decide which category something belongs to.	7.3 10.2
7. Produce stock cards.	Provide information in writing.	7.3
8. Count and record numbers of items.	Count items singly or in batches.	1.1
9. Prepare report.	Plan how to present information. Provide information by speaking to other people.	9.6 7.1

ACTION PLAN

Read these instructions individually and discuss them, as a group, with the Training Officer, making sure that you fully understand what is expected of you.

TASK 1
Locate the Catalogues you need to help you to recognise tools, equipment and components so that you can describe them for cataloguing purposes.

TASK 2
Split into pairs. Decide on the sections to be taken by each pair and the order in which the inventory will be carried out.

TASK 3
Start in each area by listing all the major items under the following headings:

(i) computer hardwear/word processors/photocopiers/typewriters;
(ii) peripherals;
(iii) furniture;
(iv) test equipment;
(v) computer software;
(vi) components;
(vii) consumable goods (other than electronic components);
(viii) office equipment.

TASK 4
1 Note the reference number of major items.

2 Describe the furniture i.e., "typists chairs"; "upright chairs"; "easy chairs"; "laminated topped table", "work bench", "desk with 4 drawers", size of table tops, etc.

3 Describe the software, i.e., computer games, programmes, by title.

4 Refer to catalogues to describe various components (you will need to ask the section supervisor to assist in identifying some of the bits and pieces before you can locate them in a catalogue).

TASK 5
Type out lists by category on the word processor and arrange in alphabetical order for each location (section).

TASK 6
From the location list produce a master list using a separate sheet for each catalogue category, i.e.:

(i) capital equipment, e.g. computers,
word processors,
office equipment,
programmes,
components,
tools,
furniture,
test equipment, etc.

(ii) consumable items, e g. kits,
PCBs,
transistors,
resistors,
connectors,
cables, etc.

(iii) stationery, etc.

TASK 7
Produce stock cards for attaching to storage bins.

TASK 8
Count and record the numbers of items on the appropriate documents.

Now complete the TRAINEE REVIEW section.

TASK 9
Prepare a project report for presentation to assembled trainees. Your report should show:

a) how the project was planned;
b) who did what;
c) how the group worked together; the problems associated with doing so and how they were overcome;
d) what lessons you have learned about stock-taking and identifying various items;
e) how stock taking might be carried out on future occasions and how to avoid some of the problems you had with your task;
f) what requisitioning and recording system would reduce the work involved in periodical stock taking.

TRAINEE REVIEW

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE AND DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR AND TUTOR.

1. What did you think of this project? Was it easy or hard, interesting or boring?

2. What did you learn? (Look back at the list of Purposes to see what you were supposed to learn.)

3. Did you learn anything which was not on the list of Purposes?

4. Did you need help with any particular part of the project?
   What kind of help did you get?

5. How do you think you could use what you learned in another job, or outside work?

6. Has this project helped you decide whether you need further training in certain areas?

SUPERVISOR REVIEW

Please refer to Supervisor's Notes.

Please read the questions included under Trainee Review.

Please complete the Assessment Form and discuss your assessment with the trainee before initialling it to show that you both agree with the assessment.

COMMENTS:

ASSESSMENT
explanatory notes

In completing this W.B.P. the trainee has the opportunity to demonstrate competence in the core skills listed on the attached form.

The first two columns list the WBP tasks and core skills which occur within them.

You are asked to assess the trainee's competence in these core skills according to the amount of support from you that the trainee needed, for example:

1. If a trainee is asked to "find information from written sources" and you provide the trainee with all the sources of that information, together with telling the trainee where to look in any particular sources, then that trainee is obviously being given much more support in finding that information than a trainee who identifies the sources and extracts correct information unaided:

2. If a trainee is asked to undertake a task which involves "noticing the needs of customers or clients", and needs considerable prompting to approach a customer, then that trainee is obviously being given more support than a trainee who takes the initiative in approaching the customer.

To be regarded as fully competent in the core skills, the trainee should need to be offered no more support than you would normally give to any experienced worker.

Most of the time job competence and core skills competence are likely to be the same, but sometimes this may not be so. For instance, a trainee involved in machining a particular component may be competent so far as planning the work is concerned (a core skill) but may not have reached experienced worker speeds (an occupational skill).

Please tick the appropriate box and initial in the space provided, after you have discussed your assessment with the trainee and agreed any further training required.

ASSESSMENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE ITEC INVENTORY CATALOGUE WBP NO DATE

TRAINEE'S NAME SUPERVISOR'S NAME

WBP TASK NO	CORE SKILLS ASSESSED	NEEDED A LOT OF ASSISTANCE	NEEDED SOME ASSISTANCE	LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE		COMMENTS: INCLUDING NO OPPORTUNITY	AGREED INITIALS	
				NEEDS MORE PRACTICE	COMPETENT		TRAINEE	SUPERVISOR
2	Plan who does what and when. (9.2)							
4	Identify items by number, colour symbols, etc. (2.4)							
	Decide which category something belongs to. (10.2)							
	Find out information from written sources. (6.2)							
6.7	Provide information in writing. (7.3)							
8	Count items singly or in batches. (1.1)							
9	Plan how to present information. (9.6)							
	Provide information by speaking to other people. (7.1)							